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HAVING already detained our readers so long upon the character of the Jewish legislator, we must give but a very hasty sketch of the remaining penmen of holy writ; of which none are more conspicuous than the sweet singer of Israel. Of a disposition sanguine, open, generous, intrepid, and sometimes hasty, he seems to have infused all these qualities into his works. His are

indeed

"Thoughts that breathe, & words that burn."

He never strikes the lyre but it thrills the soul. By impetuous bursts of gratitude to his maker, he fixes the attention of his readers, and bears them away with a power almost irresistible. When his indignation is roused, or his hopes frustrated, anger will be succeeded by fretfulness, and disappointment followed by complaint. Yet we must observe that his defects are only momentary, while his excellencies are permanent. In his haste, he would say that "all men are liars;" but reflection soon corrected his mistakes, and a recurrence to past experience restored him to his confidence in God. Nor is his ingenuous candor less remarkable in his writings than in his life. With what magnanimity does he confess his errors, and with what celerity does he retrace all his false steps. While holding up himself as an example of human weakness, he shews how others may avoid his frailties, and imitate his virtues. It would in truth be well,

if those who seek to excuse their crimes by the example of David, would also imitate him in his repentance before God, and his generosity to man.

The writings of SOLOMON, consisting chiefly of short maxims, and sententious rules and cautions, give evidently a strong picture of the writer's mind. Accustomed to make extensive observations on men & things, he drew his instructions from common life, and daily experience. Man, as presented to him on the great theatre of human actions, seems to have been his peculiar study. He learned how to detect his hypocrisy, to unfold his complicated villainy, and to shew it, as Shakespere says, in all its lean-faced haggardness. With uncommon acuteness, he has developed many of the springs of human action, and pointed out their consequences with great precision; yet, his maxims are not of universal application, nor indeed are they always correct. In the height of prosperity, himself estranged from the right way, he appears to have

judged others by his own conduct; — a mode of deciding on human character, both misanthropic, and fallacious. The disgust which he expresses with life, proceeds apparently from no other cause, than that of his having poisoned its blessings, and become satiated with its false pleasures. In his cautions about women, we fear we may perceive more than the desire to guard others against their snares, and to forewarn them of their wiles. This would have been laudable, and well-becoming his high station & dignity. But do we not rather discern the anxiety of the practised libertine, tired with his amours, and disgusted with his enjoyments? And does not the greater part of his advice proceed solely on that ground? — We are inclined to think that it does, nor are we the less confirmed in this opinion by reading his remarks on women, in general. When he declares, that though a man in a thousand he had found, yet a woman in a thousand he had not found, (meaning, no doubt virtuous,-) he advances an assertion which is contrary to universal experience, and to the history of females in all nations. We should rather believe that the converse way nearer the

truth. The fact seems to be; that this great king, forsaking the paths of wisdom, became an adept in crimes which destroyed all his domestic comforts, and rendered the latter part of his life, a scene of constant chagrin, and of unavailing regret. But can this excuse his ungenerous, and unmanly attempt, to involve the whole sex in one charge of insincerity, and of insidious profligacy, merely because he had run the round of pleasures with none but the worthless, and had been equally disappointed in them all? — These are indeed great spots, alike applicable to the man, as to his productions; yet take his works as a whole, and we shall find in them a body of just observation, of accurate discrimination of character, and of general instruction, as much superior to every other work of the kind, as the author was exalted in wisdom and grandeur above all those who had preceded him.

Leaving this wise, but licentious monarch, let us make the agreeable transition to the lofty son of Amoz.

Like Solomon, bred in a court, and nearly allied to the royal family, though not raised to the rank of a sovereign, he enjoyed the superior dignity of being a prophet of the Most High God. The cast of Isaiah's mind was of the first order. Rich, flowing, and eloquent, he has been denominated by Critics, the Hebrew Demosthenes; by Christians, the Evangelical Prophet; and by all he is acknowledged to be the most sublime, elevated, and energetic writer that ever existed. His imagery is always as appropriate, as it is copious. His style rises in regular gradation with the dignity or grandeur of his subject. At one time he presents Jehovah weighing mountains in scales, & hills in a balance; —at another, bending his ear to the humble and contrite spirit. Now we see him carrying messages of terror to falling kingdoms, and anon he unfolds to us a kingdom which shall have no end. In one place we read of the destruction of the Jewish polity; the removal of the mighty man and the counsellor, and all the awful apparatus which was to accompany, and the

miserable consequences which were to succeed these momentous events;-and in another he pointed out with astonishing exactness the birth of the Prince of Peace, on whose shoulders the government should rest, and who by his sufferings and death should bring in everlasting righteousness. In whatever way we look at Isaiah, whether as a writer, or as a man, it is impossible to find a character, who combines equal sublimity, dignity, and simplicity; or who has more eminently the power of calming, or of rousing the passions; of commanding our admiration, & of fixing our esteem. When we quit his company, it is with that regret which high genius alone can excite; and which leaves upon the mind impressions,— at once deep, elevated, and permanent.

To pass over those writers of minor importance, we must not fail to notice the plaintive note, & compassionate tone of Jeremiah, the deep and tragical swell of Ezekiel; the concise and laconic, though somewhat obscure style of Hosea;

the clear, forcible, and animated language of Joel; the elegant, pastoral simplicity of Amos; with the various beauties of Nahum, Micah, and of Habbakuk. In taking this review, we shall in almost every instance, perceive, according to our original position, that there is a strict allusion to the employments, characters, sufferings, and views of their authors.

In casting our eyes over the New-Testament writers, we shall discern a considerable difference in their respective styles, arising no doubt, from the dissimilarity of their education, and from the different stations which they had filled, previous to their being called by their Divine instructor:— yet one general character pervades the whole. By every means they are emulous to exalt their Lord and Master; not indeed at the expense of truth, or for the purpose of vain glory;— but with the sole intention of bearing testimony to his holy life, and meritorious death; and thus to recommend and enforce his doctrines upon the attention of the blind, unbelieving Jews, as well as upon that

of the proud, superciliious gentiles; — and it is with exultation and thankfulness, we can assent, that they were instruments peculiarly fitted for the work. The extreme accuracy, moral cast, and unaffected gravity of St. Matthew; the studied brevity of St. Mark; the refined, elegant, and perspicuous narrative of St. Luke; and the simple, familiar style of the beloved disciple, at once disclose the pure and candid texture of the writers' minds, and give the best evidence, which can be offered, of their sincere attachment to the noble cause which they had espoused. Nor shall we, in reviewing the close argument, and bold language of St. Paul; the warm, intrepid declarations of St. Peter; and the plain, but faithful exhortations of St. James; be long at a loss to ascertain what were the particular traits of their character, supposing even that the sacred pages had not given them at full length; — but with these in our hands we find that the writers and their works, mutually illustrated each other. The last unfold

the motives by which the first were actuated; they give the rate of intellect by which each was distinguished; the passions by which they were impelled in this great undertaking; the knowledge which they brought to bear upon every subject they touched; and they shed a lustre upon their characters, no where equalled in the annals of mankind.

Quitting the contemplation of these inspired men, let us turn to writers of our own ~~nation~~ ~~and~~ language, and see whether or not the resemblance for which we contend can be traced between the sentiments and actions of their respective authors. Our ~~p~~ limits require the postponement of this enquiry to another occasion.

F.